

## **Water suppliers taking aggressive measures to protect water from perchlorate contamination**

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**ONTARIO, Calif.** -- Recognizing the potential danger of perchlorate to local and national water supplies, California and Nevada water suppliers are preparing a course of action. Five water suppliers have commissioned the Denver-based American Water Works Association Research Foundation, to develop a comprehensive research strategy.

The research issue group consists of experts in the academic, consulting, military, utility, government, and health disciplines. These experts will identify gaps in the scientific knowledge about perchlorate and devise a research agenda. The information from the research group will contribute to the development methods of detection, treatment, and containment.

East Valley Water District, along with the San Gabriel Basin Water Master, the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, and Southern Nevada Water Authority are providing financial support to AWWARF on the perchlorate research agenda.

Primary funding of the project is expected to be \$2 million from federal monies recently appropriated by Congress, through legislation sponsored by Representative Jerry Lewis, R-Redlands, Calif., and pending before a House-Senate conference committee.

"California's water agencies have worked hard to secure funding for research efforts on the effects of perchlorate in water supplies," said Stephen Hall, executive director of the Association of California Water Agencies. "On behalf of those agencies, I thank Rep. Lewis for allowing us to move forward quickly to find answers."

Recent improvements in analytical procedures allow identification of low concentrations of perchlorate in groundwater and surface water supplies. Perchlorate is used in solid rocket propellants, and has been found in areas where aerospace materials such as rocket fuel, fireworks, and munitions were manufactured and tested.

Perchlorate has been used in medical treatments of human thyroid gland disorders. Elevated quantities of perchlorate have been found to prevent the gland's production of "growth" hormones. The California Department of Health Services (DHS) has adopted a provisional action detection level of 18 parts per billion for perchlorate in drinking water.

Testing for perchlorate has been done throughout California and Nevada at facilities considered "at risk" of being impacted. In addition, EPA and other groups are considering nationwide surveys. "This contaminant has the potential of becoming a national problem to our water supply. As the awareness of perchlorate contamination grows, it is important that we as water suppliers be prepared and take aggressive action to find a solution," said Robert Martin, General Manager of East Valley Water District.

Many of the "at risk" sites currently impacted by perchlorate are impacted by other pollutants that have previously been identified. However, low concentrations of perchlorate have migrated further than most

of the other identified pollutants.

Treatment methods effective for the removal of other pollutants are ineffective in the treatment and removal of perchlorate from the water supply. As discoveries of perchlorate grow in number, the urgency to discover a safe and efficient system of removal is imperative. The organization of the research issues group and the availability of federal funding are the first step in developing a solution to growing water quality issues nationwide, Martin said.

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